

CLAIMS

1. Device for collecting various articles, such as scrap, containers or other objects floating on the surface of an aqueous environment, such as the sea or a river, this device, which is designed to be towed by one or two vessels, being composed essentially of at least one filtering pocket (1), such as a drag-net, for confinement of articles to be collected, and of a structure (2) on which the confinement pocket (1) is fixed, characterized in that the confinement pocket (1) is fixed in a separable manner over its entire length to said structure (2), and in that the structure (2) is an inflatable structure that is fixed to the outside of the pocket (1) and that when inflated keeps at least part of the pocket (1), especially next to the opening of said pocket (1), above and/or at the level of the surface of the water.

2. Device according to claim 1, wherein the inflatable structure (2) over more or less the entire length keeps at least part of the confinement pocket (1) above and/or essentially at the level of the surface (1') of the sea.

3. Device according to one of claims 1 and 2, wherein the inflatable structure (2) is lengthened beyond the opening of the confinement pocket (1) in the form of two arms (2') of differing aspect to form an entry guide for articles floating toward the opening of the pocket (1) of the drag-net.

4. Device according to claim 3, wherein each arm (2') is connected to the remainder of the inflatable structure (2) via a removable link (9) such as an articulated link of the hinge type to allow rapid separation of the arms (2') from the remainder of the inflatable structure (2).

5. Device according to claim 4, wherein the removable link (9) of hinge type is composed of

two elements (9B, 9A) respectively, 9B being integral with the arm (2), the other, (9A), integral with the remainder of the inflatable structure (2), said elements (9A, 9B) of the hinge (9) being joined to one another via a removable axis (11) that allows rapid separation between the arm (2) and the remainder of the inflatable structure (2).

6. Device according to one of claims 3 to 5, wherein each arm (2') preferably has the shape of at least one inflatable fender and on its base along its generatrices is provided with a skirt (3) with ballast.

7. Device according to one of claims 1 to 6, wherein the inflatable structure (2) is composed of a plurality of inflatable beams forming essentially a U in the horizontal plane.

8. Device according to one of claims 1 to 7, wherein in the vicinity of the entry opening of the confinement pocket (1), there is an inflatable or rigid frame in the shape of an arch (8), one edge of the opening of the pocket (1) being fixed on this arched frame (8).

9. Device according to claim 8, wherein the frame in the shape of an arch (8) is kept in the raised position of the arch (8) by two arch supports (8A), each composed of at least one element, preferably tubular, located in the vicinity of the connecting zone between the arm (2') and the inflatable structure (2) and joined to the arm (2) and/or the inflatable structure (2), each arch support (8A) being used to house, in a movable manner, an upright of the arch (8), the peak of the arch (8) being used to fix one edge, the so-called upper edge of the confinement pocket (1), preferably via a strap (8B).

10. Device according to one of claims 1 to 9, wherein the confinement pocket (1) is connected to the inflatable structure (2) by a holding cable (12) that is threaded within the gaskets in the form of a loop (14), which gaskets are integral with the confinement pocket (1) and project

through the eyelets (13) that are integral with the inflatable structure (2), disconnection of the inflatable structure/pocket being obtained by simply removing the holding cable (12).

11. Device according to one of claims 1 to 10, wherein the confinement pocket (1) has the shape of two pockets housed within one another, the outside pocket that forms the reinforcement being made of a material with less elasticity than that of the material comprising the inside confinement pocket.

12. Device according to one of claims 1 to 11, wherein the bottom of the confinement pocket (1) is equipped with a slide fastener to allow the pocket (1) to be emptied and re-used.

13. Device according to one of claims 3 to 12, wherein the inflatable structure (2), the arms (2') and the confinement pocket (1) can be separated from one another.